



# The Ames Intelligencer

**Issue 1 of 4 ■ Ames Heritage Association Newsletter ■ Jan. 2001**

**■ The Ames Intelligencer was the first newspaper in the city of Ames ■**

## Bauge Home Stars in the New Exhibit at the Museum!

*Preview by exhibit curators, Willie & Rollie Struss*

Although the Bauge Home is closed for the winter and covered with snow like all of Iowa, an exhibit at the Story Center Museum will allow visitors to experience the log house in comfort.

Many items from the home are on display at the museum, along with others from 1890 – 1910, the time period to which the home is being restored.

On entering the museum, you will be greeted by Lars and Anna Bauge. Near the door is a layout of the bedroom with a "rope bed". A docent will explain how the bed was assembled and where the saying "sleep tight" came from. The size of the Bauge home bedroom is smaller than the size of many bathrooms of today. Of course, the 1900 bathroom was a small building outdoors!



The living room features typical furniture of the period including a "potbelly stove". The kitchen area in the display is smaller than the kitchen of the actual house, but will give a feeling of what it was like to cook and live without today's appliances and electricity.



A small display represents how a log house was built and shows typical construction in 1865 when the trees used to build the house had to be cut and shaped by hand, not by power saws. Lumber could not be ordered to specifications and delivered to the job site.



Be sure to bring the kids to see this new exhibit, too! There will be many things Grandmas and Grandpas will remember from their childhoods that explain how things were "back when I was a kid".

The Bauge exhibit will be on view through the first week of April. We look forward to seeing you at the museum!

## "Bringing the Past To Life" Four New Museum Exhibits at The Story Center: Jan. 20 – April 8

- Bauge Log House: Building from the Past
- Hoggatt School: Learning from the Past
- Farwell Brown: Stories of the Historian
- Tile Tales of Ames History

### Farwell T. Brown: Stories of the Historian

From the current exhibit curated by Kathy Svec

#### "Just the Facts"

- 1864 Ames established, first plat laid out
- 1865 First train arrived in Ames; first house built; population about 100
- 1866 Paternal grandparents, the K.W. Brown family, arrived in Ames
- 1869 Maternal grandparents, the George Tilden family, arrived the year the college opened; Ames population 500-600
- 1910 Born at home to Harry & Mary Brown, 1004 Kellogg (no hospital in Ames yet). "Farwell" was his great-grandmother's maiden name & his father's middle name.
- 1929 Graduated from Ames High School
- 1929-30 Attended Oberlin College in Ohio, freshman yr.
- 1934 Graduated from Iowa State College in Ag Econ.
- 1934-62 Worked in the insurance business with his father
- 1962-76 Worked as a property appraiser for the Iowa Highway Commission (now the DOT)
- 1975 Started giving Ames history presentations for service club programs
- 1976 Retired Jan. 1 in America's bicentennial year. Agreed to give talks on Ames history for the Ames Bicentennial Commission's year-long program (gave over 40).
- 1981 Founded Ames Heritage Association to support preservation of Ames history & restoration of Hoggatt School.
- 1986 Named official Ames historian by City Council
- 1993 Published 1st book of Ames stories:  
*Ames, The Early Years in Word and Pictures:  
From Marsh to Modern City*



- 1989 Donated photographic archive to Ames Public Library
- 1999 Published second book of Ames stories:  
*Ames in Word and Picture: Further Tales & Personal Memories.*  
Celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Q:**  
How did Farwell Tilden Brown come to be the Ames historian, as he says, by just "standing there"?

**A:**  
Farwell was the grandson of two pioneer families, the Browns and the Tildens. The Browns operated the first grocery. The Tildens were partners in a dry goods store. He grew up hearing family stories about the "early days".

He also inherited a "garage-full of stuff" from his grandmother, Margaret Mitchell Brown, his grandfather's 2nd wife and the only Brown grandmother he ever knew.

She had been the Tilden Store bookkeeper all her life, and was meticulous in all that she did. She had saved clippings and pictures, all carefully identified. Much of the "stuff" he inherited was her collection.

These artifacts formed the basis of Farwell's first ventures into telling Ames stories, an interest that he didn't investigate much until he retired from the Department of Transportation in 1976.

His interest picked up momentum when he was asked to give programs and talks around Ames in conjunction with Ames' celebration of the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976.



**Q:**  
What stimulated collecting all those Ames pictures?

**A:**  
"The initial pictures came from my grandmother's album," he says. Then he found postcards of the type with real photographic images, showing early Ames scenes. The first ones he found spurred interest in finding more.

After the bicentennial talks, people would come up and say, "I have a picture..." This happened time and time again.

People loaned the pictures. He took them home, copied them on a copy-stand set-up he had fixed up and added to the collection this way. For a while, he had a darkroom and developed and printed the pictures himself.

He also used Iowa State's archives. The staff would pull a file and allow him to take it home. He would copy the images and take the file back in a day. He still does this.

"They trust me," he says, "but now they take them to the Photo Service [for the copies], or I take them." This is how the collection grew. He estimates that 15-20% of his pictures came from ISU.

He also found antique dealers who would look for Ames images and call him. When he would travel to do research, he would stop in shops and look.

Once, on a research excursion he stopped for lunch in Ackley, a small town on Hwy 20 near Waterloo. Next-door was a second-hand shop. He told the proprietor he was interested in Ames, and asked if he had any old photos or postcards.

The man had "just got" a box of postcards that had belonged to 1908 graduate of Iowa State. There were 15-20 postcards, all of campus prior to 1908. Farwell didn't have any of those images, and took home 12. He says, "I've been doing this for 22 years."

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**Q:**  
**How else did pictures come to you?**

**A:**  
Once, a woman whose father had died in Galveston, Texas, wrote to the Ames city clerk. She had a box of pictures, she said in the letter. Did anyone want them?

The city clerk called Farwell, Farwell called the woman, and got the box. There were a "bunch of cards" that are now in his collection. Another note to City offices came from San Diego. A woman found an old album on a trash can behind her apartment. It was full of pictures of Ames, Iowa. Someone had died, and things had been put out to be hauled away. Of course, Farwell wanted the album.

When it arrived, he discovered it had belonged to a woman who graduated from Ames High in the Class of 1926. In it were lots of pictures and a few other treasures – like a letter written to her father from college president Raymond Pearson.

Once he was in the dentist's office and a woman from Nevada was there with her child. In the course of conversation, she offered to loan him an album to copy, which he accepted. Genealogists have also produced inquiries. This sort of thing kept going on and on and on.

It's been something like that, off and on, all the time. Anyone in town who had pictures or who found pictures, called him. He always said yes!

Then, there are other things that happen. The Browns attended an Elderhostel in Dickinson, North Dakota. One of the professors who lectured asked if Farwell knew a certain Iowa State College English professor?

"Wherever I go," says Farwell, "the subject [of Ames history] comes up. Things fan out. I've had a lot of fun, conversation-wise."

Since 1976, he has exceeded the capacity of two computers. In the year 2001, Farwell is going slower, but still keeps at it. "I get things done," he chuckles, "only compared to doing nothing!"

**Q:**

Talk more about the way you do research. Where do you find the information you want?

**A:**

At the county courthouse, Farwell searches title and property records and birth, death and marriage records. He goes to the auditor's, the recorder's and the clerk's offices. These records produce information, and also research ideas.

"When I first retired," Farwell says, "the recorder was touchy. He would say, "Tell me and I'll look it up." As time went on, I could go where I wanted."

People in those offices at first would ask him for his list, but he often didn't have a list, just a general idea of where he wanted to go, knowing that the records would lead the way. "It makes a researcher into a sort of detective," he says.

Sometimes office personnel didn't know or wouldn't recognize open records laws and his right to see the things he requested. There were many attempts to cover up, alter or hide records. Getting what he wanted took persistence.

Historical research was a natural extension of the type of research he had done as a DOT appraiser for 20 years before he retired. Then, he was always looking for data on property ownership and land values. When he retired, he kept on doing it – just moved back in time!

Farwell also did a lot of research at the library and archives at the Department of Transportation. When he started in '76, their pictures were stashed in the basement, just stacked on shelves getting dusty.

Photographs of road projects in and around Ames often yielded information about other things. He copied lots of these pictures. "I've had the good luck," Farwell says, "to live long enough to see things evolve in organization." Now, their collection is in better order.

He also found information at the Ames, Nevada and ISU libraries, where microfilmed newspapers and federal census records produced lots of information.

**"I've made my living visiting."**

People, of course, have also been a primary source of information. "I have not hesitated to call people long-distance when I believed they could supply me with information."

When he changed jobs in 1962 and went to the Highway Commission, he found his education and his experience "fit like a glove". Just like the insurance business, getting appraisal information involved talking with people.

"I've made my living visiting," he says. "It's all the same kind of thing. Everything I've done has had the same common, base element. It all relates to my interest in history."

## **News ■ News ■ News ■ News**

### **Have You Renewed? Check Your Newsletter's Label!**

The AHA membership year is January 1 to December 30. We do thank the many members who have already responded to the renewal notice sent in early January. Check the newsletter's mailing label to see if you still need to send in your annual dues. If it says "01", you're current; if not, please take a moment to renew.

### **Ask-A-Friend Campaign**

Won't you help us increase our base of support by asking a friend you know to become an AHA member? Your one-on-one invitation would provide an important personal touch. AHA is supported entirely by dues and donations, with occasional support from grants for specific projects.

### **Museum Open Hours & Phone**

The museum is open Wednesday and Friday afternoon, 1-4pm, Saturday 10am-5pm, and Sunday 2-5pm. The phone is 515-232-2148. See you at the museum!

### **Try Being A Museum Host!**

AHA Volunteer Coordinator, Carole Jensen, is seeking additional museum hosts. Volunteers receive an orientation, materials about the exhibits and usually serve one to two 3-hr. shifts per month. Give Carole a call at 233-2431.

*Pictured below: new museum signage!*

**Ames Intelligencer**  
**Ames Heritage Association**  
**PO Box 821**  
**Ames, Iowa 50010**



### **Clip & Return Renewal Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Individual	\$25	Sustaining	\$100
Family	\$40	Benefactor	\$500
Friend	\$50	Patron	\$1,000

Send to:

Ames Heritage Assn., PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010

*[Handwritten signature]*

Ames Heritage Association Board: President - Kathy Svec; Vice-President - Carole Jensen; Secretary - Willie Struss; Treasurer - Bill LaGrange, Peggy Baer, Donna Cipolloni, Suann Evans, Mark Hamlin, Jon Harvey, Jean Jonas, Liz Manion, Nick Howell. Rollie Struss. The Board meets monthly.

Ames Heritage Association is a legally incorporated, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through the operation of three historic sites as well as publications, programs and exhibitions.

The Intelligencer newsletter is named after an early Ames newspaper. It is published three to four times a year for Association members. Direct comments & questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010.

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